

Musical Trash

Lesson by Karol Dougherty, Indianapolis; updated May 2009

Grades: 2-6

Objectives: The students will:

- Be able to describe each of the 3 R's and give an example of each.
- Recognize ways that they can reduce solid waste.
- Be able to identify items that can be recycled or reused.



National Geography Standards and Indiana Social Studies Standards:
Environment & Society standards can be covered by this lesson.

Procedures:

1. Introduce the term trash. Trash is items that we no longer use or want that we throw away. We throw a lot of things away. Ask students to name the last thing that they threw away. Ask how many trash cans or bags does their family throw away each week.
2. Stress to students the importance of not being wasteful by reducing, reusing and recycling trash. At this time introduce the 3 R's and show a poster or image depicting the three. You could also play Jack Johnson's song (The 3 R's) or provide the lyrics to the class.
3. Ask the students to define the three words. Ask what we can do to reduce, reuse and recycle trash. Examples of reducing are buying only things that we really need, things that will last a long time and things that have the least packaging. Examples of reusing are by repairing, fixing or finding new uses for items. Example of recycling is to take an old item and make something new with it. Show examples of each. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences website is very useful <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/recycle.htm>.
4. Show students the paper of nine different items that represent trash. Then show a trash can that is used when something cannot be reused or recycled. Ask what will happen to this trash. (Landfill or buried to make energy) Show a reuse symbol (stop sign) and say when trash is reused it is stopped and not thrown away. The next symbol is the recycle (arrows forming a triangle) and say that to recycle is to send an item to a recycle center.
5. Make trash necklaces. Cut the handout apart and glue on a card, putting a hole at the top and threading a piece of yarn long enough to go around the neck. Give each student a necklace to put on.
6. Make three poster board signs: Trash, Reuse, Recycle. Position them around the room. Set up chairs in a circle as for musical chairs. Do not forget to have one less chair than there are students. Put a big trash can in the middle of the circle.
7. Explain to students that we are going to play musical trash. The necklaces that you are wearing represent the trash that will be thrown away when the music stops and you cannot find a chair. The student will go and stand in the middle next to the trash can. Take a chair out after each round. Continue until only one student is left.
8. Ask what happens to the trash can after each round. Reemphasize that many kinds of trash are reused or recycled and only some are thrown away.
9. Have all students look at their trash item on the necklace and decide what could be done with their type of trash. Point to the two areas in the room, designed for reuse and recycle. On the count of five, have students walk to the area where they think their trash should go. Remind them that some trash will stay in the trash can. Then tell each student the correct method of disposal for their item.
10. Continue to play several rounds so students can switch trash items.

Evaluation:

Ask students to give two examples of how they can reduce trash at home.

Ask students to name three items that can be recycled and two items they could reuse.

Extentions:

- Discuss how much trash the average person generates. (possible resources: Annenberg project www.learner.org/interactives/garbage/intro.html; EPA site www.epa.gov/epawaste/index.htm) Have students record how much trash their home generates in a week.
- Start of expand on a recycling program at your school.
- Investigate how trash is disposed of in your area. Visit a local facility (ie-landfill, recycling center, incinerator)



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